

REMARKS

Claims 21-26 and 28-40 are pending in the application with claims 21, 26 and 31 being independent claims. Claim 27 has been cancelled. Claims 1-20 were previously cancelled. Independent claims 21, 26 and 31 have been amended to incorporate the features of dependent claims 27 and 38. Thus, Applicants believe the amendments do not necessitate a new search. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Claims 21, 23, 25, 31-37 and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated. Claims 22, 24, 26, 28-30, 38 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious. These rejections are addressed below.

The Claims are Patentable Over the Oya and Deweese References

Claims 21, 23, 25, 31-37 and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,208,379 to Oya et al. ("the Oya reference"). Claims 22, 24, 26, 29-30 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Oya reference. Claims 28 and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Oya reference as applied to claims 26 and 31, and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2005/0262542 by Deweese et. al. ("the Deweese reference"). These rejections are traversed for at least the reasons below.

The independent claims 21, 26, and 31 have been amended to include video conferencing between workstations via the bidirectional communications switch. The Oya reference does not disclose any such capability. The Oya reference merely discloses communication between a workstation and a camera control/management server. Moreover, the Oya reference is entirely silent regarding any capability or need for communication between workstations via the camera control/management server.

Although the DeWeese reference describes a "chat" feature that can enable video or audio communication, no motivation exists to combine the "chat" communication capability described in the DeWeese reference with the Oya reference. In fact, the DeWeese reference is

not combinable with the Oya reference because the underlying technologies involved are incongruent. The DeWeese reference is directed to communication within a cable television distribution network using “user television equipment,” while the Oya reference involves communication within a computer-based network using workstations (e.g., personal computers). The DeWeese reference explicitly states that “user television equipment does not include equipment based on personal computers” (paragraph [0059]). Therefore, a combination of the Oya and DeWeese references is improper.

Thus, the Oya reference alone, and the Oya reference in view of the DeWeese reference fail to disclose or suggest one or more recitations of independent claims 21, 26, and 31 as amended. For at least these reasons, independent claims 21, 26, and 31, and their respective dependent claims, are patentable over the Oya and DeWeese references. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the outstanding rejections of the claims.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed or rendered moot. The Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding objections and rejections. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that further personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided. Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

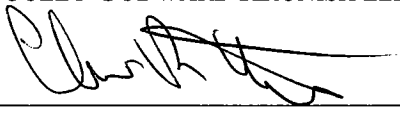
The Director is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16, 1.17, and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1283.

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Respectfully submitted,
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